

What Is Tribalism?

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Tribalism is the state of being organized in,^[1] or advocating for, a [tribe](#) or tribes. In terms of [conformity](#), tribalism may also refer to a way of thinking or behaving in which people are more loyal to their [tribe](#) than to their friends, their country, or any other social group.^[2]

The social structure of a tribe can vary greatly from case to case, but, due to the small size of tribes, it is always a relatively simple role structure, with few (if any) significant social distinctions between individuals.^[3]

Tribalism implies the possession of a strong cultural or ethnic identity that separates one member of a group from the members of another group. It is a precondition for members of a tribe to possess a strong feeling of identity for a true tribal society to form.^[4] The distinction between these two definitions for *tribalism* is an important one because, while *tribal society* no longer strictly exists in the [western world](#), *tribalism*, by this second definition, is arguably undiminished. People have postulated that the human brain is hard-wired towards tribalism due to its evolutionary advantages.^{[5][6]} See [Tribalism and evolution](#) below.

Many tribes refer to themselves with their language's word for "people," while referring to other, neighboring tribes with various epithets. For example, the term "[Inuit](#)" translates as "people," but they were known to the [Ojibwe](#) by a name 'Eskimo' translating roughly as "eaters of raw meat."^[7]

Tribalism and violence

The [anthropological](#) debate on [warfare](#) among tribes is unsettled. While typically and certainly found among [horticultural](#) tribes, an open question remains whether such warfare is a typical feature of hunter-gatherer life, or an anomaly found only in certain circumstances, such as scarce resources (as with the [Inuit](#) or [Arabs](#)), or among food producing societies.^{[8][9]} There is also ambiguous evidence whether the level of violence among tribal societies is greater or lesser than the levels of violence among [civilized](#) societies.

If nothing else, conflict in tribal societies can never achieve the absolute scale of civilized warfare. ^{[[citation needed](#)]} Tribes use forms of subsistence such as horticulture and foraging which, though more efficient, cannot yield the same number of absolute calories as [agriculture](#).^{[[citation needed](#)]} This limits tribal populations significantly, especially when compared to agricultural populations.^[10] Lawrence Keeley notes in *War Before Civilization* that examples exist with low percentage rates of casualties in



"It sort of makes you stop and think, doesn't it."

tribal battle. He also points out that some tribal battles were much more lethal as a *percentage* of population than, for example, the [Battle of Gettysburg](#). He concludes from the data examined that no evidence consistently indicates that primitive battles are proportionately less lethal than civilized ones. [\[11\]](#)

Tribalism and evolution

Tribalism has a very adaptive effect in [human evolution](#). Humans are social animals, and ill-equipped to live on their own.[\[citation needed\]](#) Tribalism and ethnocentrism help to keep individuals committed to the group, even when personal relations may fray.[\[citation needed\]](#) This keeps individuals from wandering off or joining other groups. It also leads to [bullying](#) when a tribal member is unwilling to conform to the politics of the collective.

Socially, divisions between groups fosters specialized interactions with others, based on association: altruism (positive interactions with unrelated members), kin-selectivity (positive interactions with related members), and violence (negative interactions). Thus, groups with a strong sense of unity and identity can benefit from [kin selection](#) behavior such as common property and shared resources. The tendency of members to unite against an outside tribe and the ability to act violently and prejudicially against that outside tribe likely boosted the chances of survival in genocidal conflicts.

Modern examples of tribal genocide rarely reflect the defining characteristics of tribes existing prior to the [Neolithic Revolution](#)--for example, small population and close-relatedness.

According to a study by [Robin Dunbar](#) at the [University of Liverpool](#), primate brain size is determined by social group size.[\[12\]](#) Dunbar's conclusion was that most human brains can only really understand an average of 150 individuals as fully developed, complex [people](#) (Known as [Dunbar's number](#)). In contrast, anthropologist H. Russell Bernard and [Peter Killworth](#) have done a variety of field studies in

the United States that came up with an estimated mean number of ties, 290, that is roughly double Dunbar's estimate. The Bernard–Killworth [median](#) of 231 is lower, due to upward straggle in the distribution, but still appreciably larger than Dunbar's estimate. [\[13\]\[14\]\[15\]](#)

[Malcolm Gladwell](#) expanded on this conclusion sociologically in his book, *The Tipping Point* where one of his types - Connectors - were successful due to their larger than average number of close friendships and capacity for maintaining them which tie otherwise unconnected social groups together. According to these studies, then, "tribalism" is in some sense an inescapable fact of human neurology, simply because many human brains are not adapted to working with large populations. Once a person's limit for connection is reached, the human brain must resort to some combination of hierarchical schemes, [stereotypes](#), and other simplified models in order to understand so many people.

Nevertheless, complex societies (and [corporations](#)) rely upon the tribal instincts of their members for their organization and survival.[\[citation needed\]](#) For example, a representative [democracy](#) relies on the ability of a "tribe" of representatives to organize and deal with the problems of an entire nation. [\[citation needed\]](#) The instincts that these representatives are using to deal with national problems have been highly developed in the long course of human evolution on a small tribal scale, and this is the source of both their usefulness and their disutility. Indeed, much of the political tension in modern societies is the conflict between the desire to organize a [nation-state](#) using the tribal values of egalitarianism and unity and the simple fact that large societies are unavoidably impersonal and sometimes not amenable to small-society rules.

In complex societies, this tribalistic impulse can also be channelled into more frivolous avenues, manifesting itself in sports rivalries and other such "fan" affiliations.

"New tribalism"

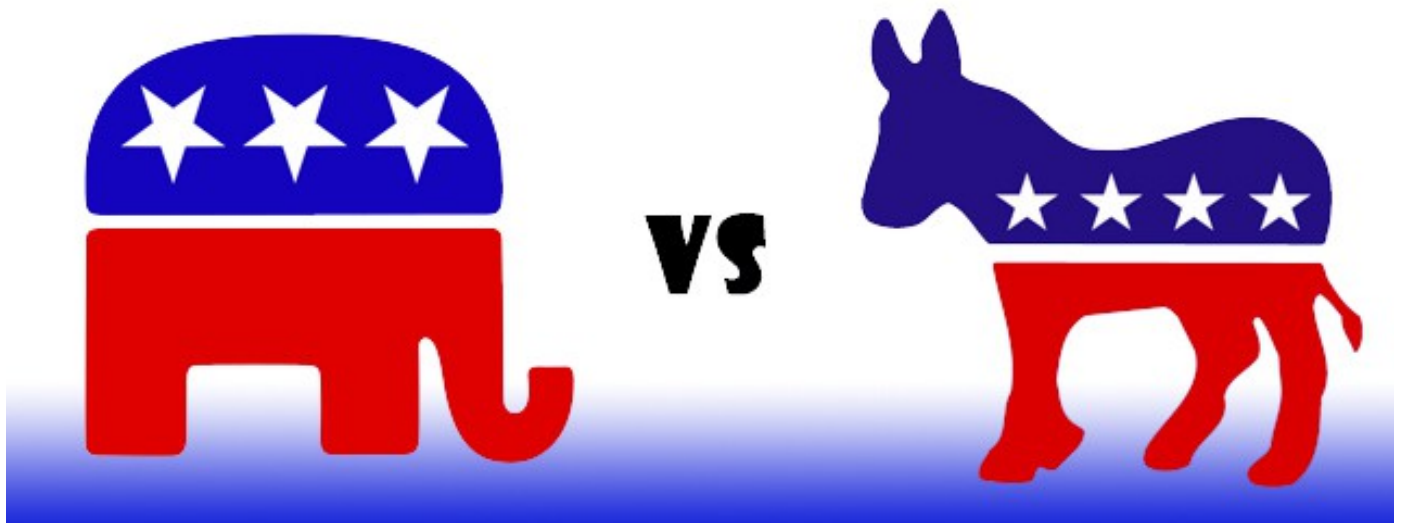
In the past 50 years, [anthropologists](#) have greatly revised the understanding of the tribe. [Franz Boas](#) removed the idea of unilineal [cultural evolution](#) from the realm of serious anthropological research as too simplistic, allowing tribes to be studied in their own right, rather than stepping stones to [civilization](#) or "living fossils". Anthropologists such as [Richard Borshay Lee](#) and [Marshall Sahlins](#) began publishing studies that showed tribal life as an easy, safe life, the opposite of the traditional theoretical supposition. In the title to his book, Sahlins referred to these tribal cultures as "the [Original Affluent Society](#)," not for their material wealth, but for their combination of leisure and lack of want.

This work is for the progression of humanity and the enlightenment of ourselves, such as that advocated by [John Zerzan](#) or [Daniel Quinn](#). These philosophers have led to [new tribalists](#) pursuing what Daniel Quinn dubbed the "New Tribal Revolution". The new tribalists use the term "tribalism" not in its widely thought of derogatory sense, but to refer to what they see as the defining characteristics of tribal life: namely, an open, [egalitarian](#), [classless](#) and cooperative community. New tribalists insist that this is, in fact, the natural state of humanity, and proven by two million years of human evolution.

The Truth About Slavery: Past, Present and Future VIDEO BELOW

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=31E1gHowYcA>

What Is Tribalism Past And Present?





Vs



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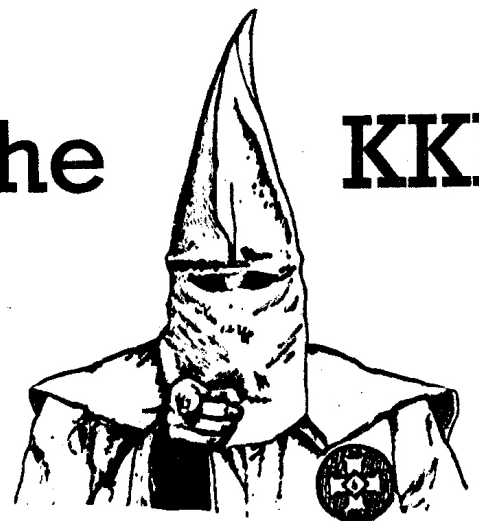


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